



PLANT INDUSTRY<sup>[3]</sup>  
Policy Letter #89-2  
April 28, 1989

## PLANT INDUSTRY<sup>[3]</sup> GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING OR CHANGING PEST RATINGS

### I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Section 403 of the California Food and Agricultural Code mandates that, "The department shall prevent the introduction and spread of injurious insect or animal pests, plant diseases, and noxious weeds." This statutory duty requires a pest policy which recognizes that organisms vary as to their potential and actual harm to California's agriculture and environment. Overall pest significance is the basis for determining what pest prevention activities are appropriate, at what level, and when and where those activities should be conducted.

- A. Pest ratings are intended as aids to inform county agricultural commissioners and other interested persons as to a particular pest's environmental, agricultural and biological significance, as well as its importance to the general public, and the action recommended by the Department to deal with the pest.
- B. Each pest rating represents the Department's view of the statewide importance of the pest to the agricultural, horticultural, forestry and public health interests of California. Local conditions may dictate more stringent action against the same pest in individual counties at the discretion of the county agricultural commissioner.
- C. It is the Department's policy to use the "Action Oriented Rating System". Pest ratings represent the Department's policy governing what action is to be taken consistent with existing statutes which include authority for: the promulgation of quarantine, eradication, control, standards of cleanliness, and other regulations; holding and inspection; establishing host-free, weed-free, and special pest control districts; and for other regulatory activities.

### II. ACTION ORIENTED RATING SYSTEM

#### DEFINITIONS

- "A" An organism of known economic importance subject to state (or commissioner when acting as a state agent) enforced action involving: eradication, quarantine regulation, containment, rejection, or other holding action.
- "B" An organism of known economic importance subject to: eradication, containment, control or other holding action at the discretion of the individual county agricultural commissioner.

or

An organism of known economic importance subject to state endorsed holding action and eradication only when found in a nursery.

“C” An organism subject to no state enforced action outside of nurseries except to retard spread. At the discretion of the county agricultural commissioner.

or

An organism subject to no state enforced action except to provide for pest cleanliness in nurseries.

“Q” An organism or disorder requiring temporary “A” action pending determination of a permanent rating. The organism is suspected to be of economic importance but its status is uncertain because of incomplete identification or inadequate information.

In the case of an established infestation, at the discretion of the Director<sup>[1]</sup>, the Department may conduct surveys and may convene the Division Pest Study Team to determine a permanent rating.

“D” No action. (Parasites, predators, and organisms of little or no economic importance).

### III. PROCEDURE FOR ESTABLISHING NEW RATINGS

- A. A specimen/sample is received by the Analysis and Identification Branch<sup>[4]</sup> and an unrated organism is identified. The identifier, because of incomplete identification or insufficient information, may assign a “Q” rating if the organism is believed to be of economic importance, documenting the reason(s) for the rating.
- B. If the organism is of no economic importance or is a beneficial, the identifier may assign a “D” rating. No further action is required.
- C. To assign a permanent “A”, “B”, or “C” pest rating, the identifier presents supporting documentation to the appropriate primary state professional, and they reach an agreement on a proposed rating.
- D. The Branch Chief of Analysis and Identification<sup>[4]</sup> is then notified in writing by the primary state professional of the proposed rating and reasons why this rating was selected.
- E. The Branch Chief of Analysis and Identification<sup>[4]</sup> notifies the Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup> of Plant Industry<sup>[3]</sup> and the Division Branch Chiefs of the proposed “A”, “B”, or “C” rating and the reasons supporting the proposed rating. If there are no valid objections within two weeks, the Branch Chief of Analysis and Identification<sup>[4]</sup> will assume concurrence and notify the county agricultural commissioners of the proposed rating. The rating is established 30 days later if no adverse comments are received and there is no request for a formal meeting of the appropriate Division Pest Study Team.

- F. Other state agencies, such as Fish and Game, Health and Forestry, will be consulted regarding their position on proposed ratings for those organisms involving their regulatory or public responsibilities.
- G. Adverse comments, if any, will be reviewed by the identifier and the appropriate primary state professional. If necessary, they will be referred to the Division Pest Study Team and/or the Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup> for resolution. A request for a formal meeting of the Division Pest Study Team is to be accompanied by the reasons/supporting data for the request.
- H. The Division Pest Study Team, if convened, will recommend a pest rating to the Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup>, Division of Plant Industry<sup>[3]</sup>.
- I. The Branch Chief of Analysis and Identification<sup>[4]</sup> will issue the "Important Notice" of the assigned rating.
- J. All "Q"-rated pests known to be established in California will be reviewed every March by the primary state professionals to determine if the "Q" status should be continued or if a permanent rating should be proposed. A written report on each review will be prepared and sent to the Branch Chiefs and the Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup>. Any proposed permanent rating will be handled as outlined in steps D through H.
- K. If the Director<sup>[1]</sup> determines that an unrated pest poses a major threat to California's agriculture or environment, the Director's<sup>[1]</sup> Statement of Findings regarding that pest supercedes this document.

#### IV. PROCEDURE FOR CHANGING ESTABLISHED RATINGS

- A. Any interested person may recommend a change in an established rating by submitting a request to the Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup> for Plant Industry<sup>[3]</sup>. The Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup> will refer the request to the appropriate primary state professional.
- B. To change an "A", "B", "C", or "D" pest rating, the proposer presents supporting documentation to the appropriate primary state professional, and they reach agreement on the proposed rating change.
- C. The Branch Chief of Analysis and Identification<sup>[4]</sup> is then notified in writing by the primary state professional of the proposed rating change and reasons why this rating was selected.
- D. The Branch Chief of Analysis and Identification<sup>[4]</sup> notifies the Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup> of Plant Industry<sup>[3]</sup> and the Division Branch Chiefs of the proposed rating change and the reasons for it. If there are no valid objections within two weeks, the Branch Chief of Analysis and Identification<sup>[4]</sup> will assume concurrence and notify the county agricultural commissioners of the rating change. The new rating is established 30 days later if no adverse comments are received and there is no request for a formal meeting of the appropriate Division Pest

Study Team.

- E. Other state agencies, such as Fish and Game, Health, and Forestry, will be consulted regarding their position on proposed rating changes for those organisms involving their regulatory or public responsibilities.
- F. Adverse comments, if any, will be reviewed by the appropriate primary state professional. If necessary, they will be referred to the Division Pest Study Team and/or the Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup> for resolution. A request for a formal meeting of the Division Pest Study Team is to be accompanied by the reasons/supporting data for the request.
- G. The Division Pest Study Team, if convened, will recommend a pest rating to the Assistant Director<sup>[2]</sup>, Division of Plant Industry<sup>[3]</sup>.
- H. The Branch Chief of Analysis and Identification<sup>[4]</sup> will issue the “Important Notice” of the new assigned rating.

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<sup>[1]</sup>     ≡ Secretary of CDFA

<sup>[2]</sup>     ≡ Division Director

<sup>[3]</sup>     ≡ Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services division

<sup>[4]</sup>     ≡ Plant Pest Diagnostics Branch